

What is Successful Communication of Scientific Findings?

Professor Kristy Martire

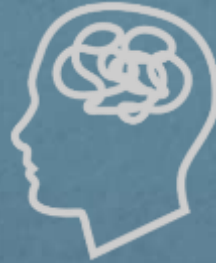


UNSW
SYDNEY



Categorical conclusion

“...Suspect X’s left shoe made the impression...”



Verbal label

“...there is strong support for the proposition that Suspect X’s left shoe made the impression...”

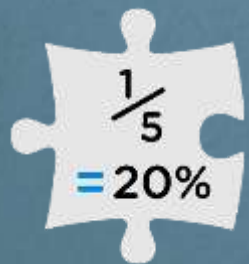


Random-match probability

“...there is 1 chance in 1,000 of observing the evidence using a different shoe...”

Likelihood ratio

“...the observed evidence is 1000 times more likely if Suspect X’s left shoe made the impression...”



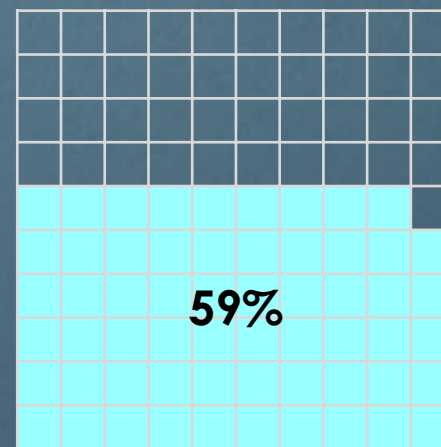
CONSISTENCY

To give equal weight to evidence of equal strength

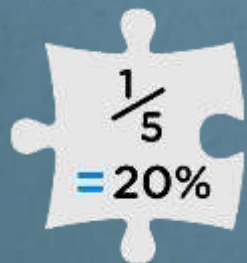
“1 in 1 million” Vs “0.0001%”



Lindsey, Hertwig & Gigerenzer, 2003



Bali et al., 2021



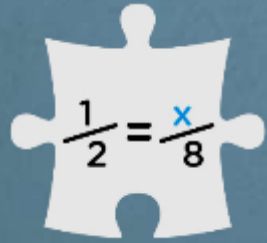
CONSISTENCY

To give equal weight to evidence of equal strength

Evidence that mathematical
equivalence often does not guarantee
psychological equivalence.

Martire & Edmond, 2020

Goodman, 1992
Lindsey et al, 2003
Koehler, 1996
Koehler, 2001
Martire et al, 2013
Martire et al, 2014
McQuiston-Surrett &
Saks, 2009
Nance & Morris, 2002
Nance & Morris, 2005
Thompson & Schuman,
1987
Thompson & Newman,
2015
Wells, 1992



ABILITY

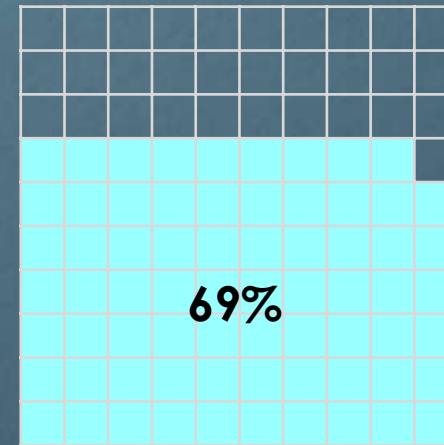
To be able to infer new information from the evidence



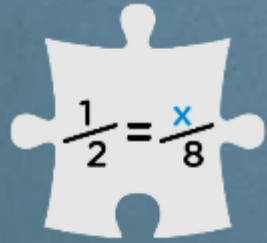
'matches'
in a city of
500,000?

DNA
profile
incidence
rate =
.001

Koehler, 2001



Bali et al., 2021



ABILITY

To be able to infer new information from the evidence

Evidence is limited and inconsistent

Goodman, 1992
Lindsey et al, 2003
Kaye et al, 2007
Koehler, 2001
McQuiston-Surrett &
Saks, 2009

Martire & Edmond, 2020



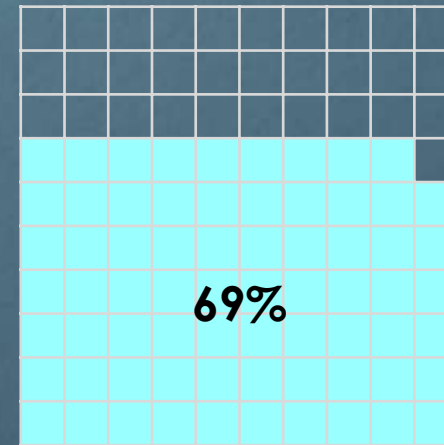
SENSITIVITY

To give more/less weight to evidence of greater/lesser strength

“5.5 times more likely” Vs “5500 times more likely”



Martire, Kemp, Sayle & Newell, 2014



Bali et al., 2021



SENSITIVITY

To give more/less weight to evidence of greater/lesser strength

Evidence of broad (rather than precise)
sensitivity to evidence strength

Martire & Edmond, 2020

De Keijser et al, 2016
Faigman & Baglioni, 1988
Goodman, 1992
Kaasa et al, 2007
Koehler, 1996
Koehler, 2001
Martire et al 2013
Martire et al 2014
Nance & Morris, 2002
Nance & Morris, 2005
Scurich & John, 2013
Smith et al, 1996
Thompson et al, 2013
Thompson & Newman,
2015

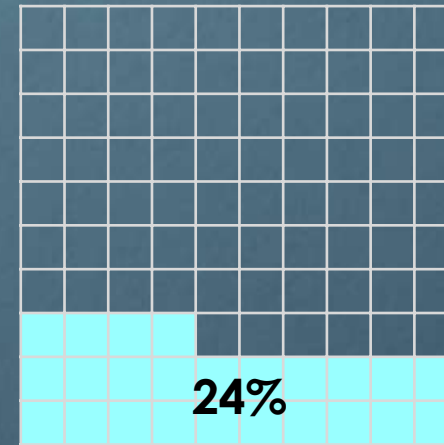


ORTHODOXY

To update beliefs in line with (Bayesian) normative expectations

$$P(H | E) = \frac{P(H) \times P(E | H)}{P(E)}$$

Bayes Theorem



Bali et al., 2021



ORTHODOXY

To update beliefs in line with (Bayesian) normative expectations

Evidence is mixed

Martire & Edmond, 2020

Goodman, 1992
Martire et al, 2013
Martire et al, 2014
Nance & Morris, 2002
Nance & Morris, 2005
Schklar & Diamond, 1999
Smith et al, 1996
Thompson & Schuman,
1987
Thompson et al, 2013
Thompson & Newman,
2015



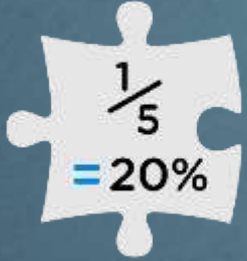
COHERENCE

To treat evidence in a logical and rational manner

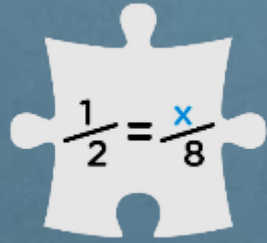
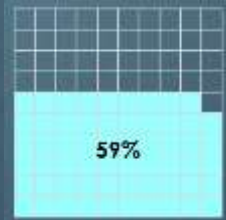
Clear evidence of aggregation errors
and fallacious reasoning (e.g., defense
attorney's fallacy)

Martire & Edmond, 2020

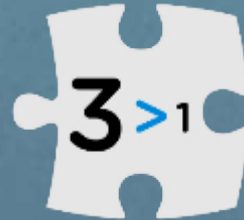
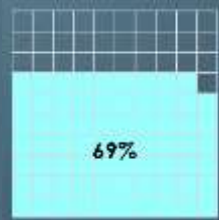
Goodman, 1992
Kaye et al, 2007
Koehler et al, 1995
Martire et al, 2013
Martire et al, 2014
Nance & Morris, 2002
Nance & Morris, 2005
Schklar & Diamond, 1999
Smith et al, 1996
Thompson & Schuman,
1987
Thompson et al, 2013
Thompson & Newman,
2015



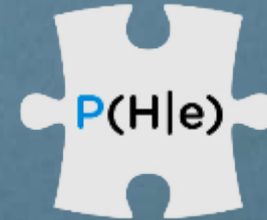
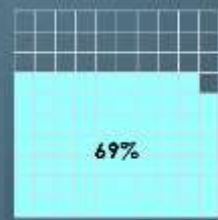
Consistency



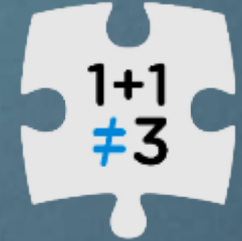
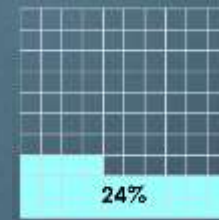
Ability



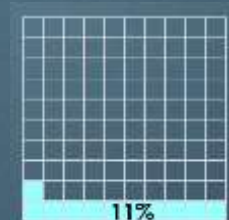
Sensitivity



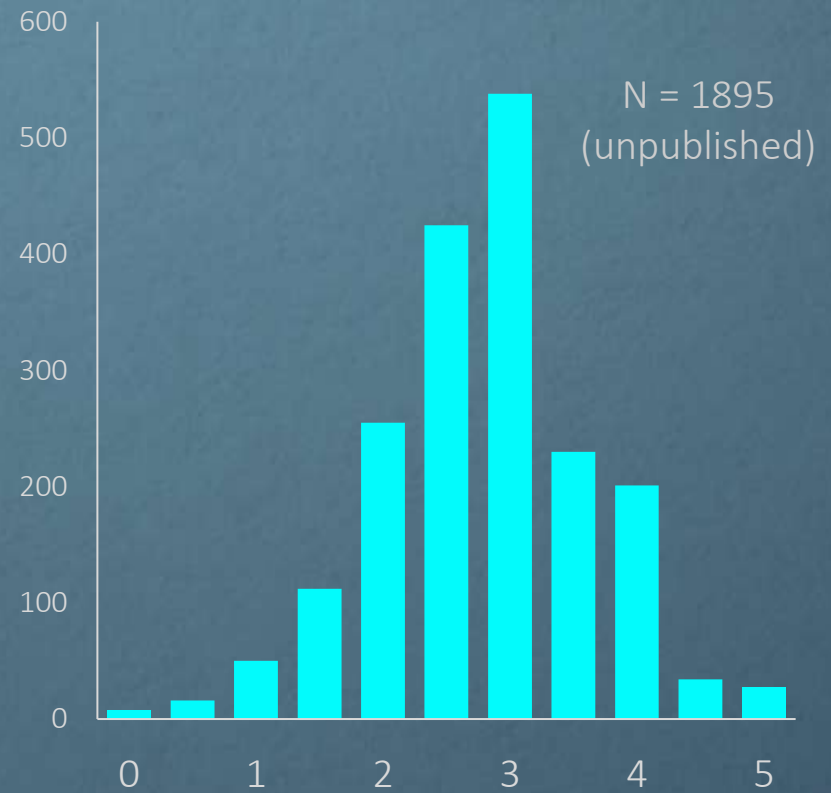
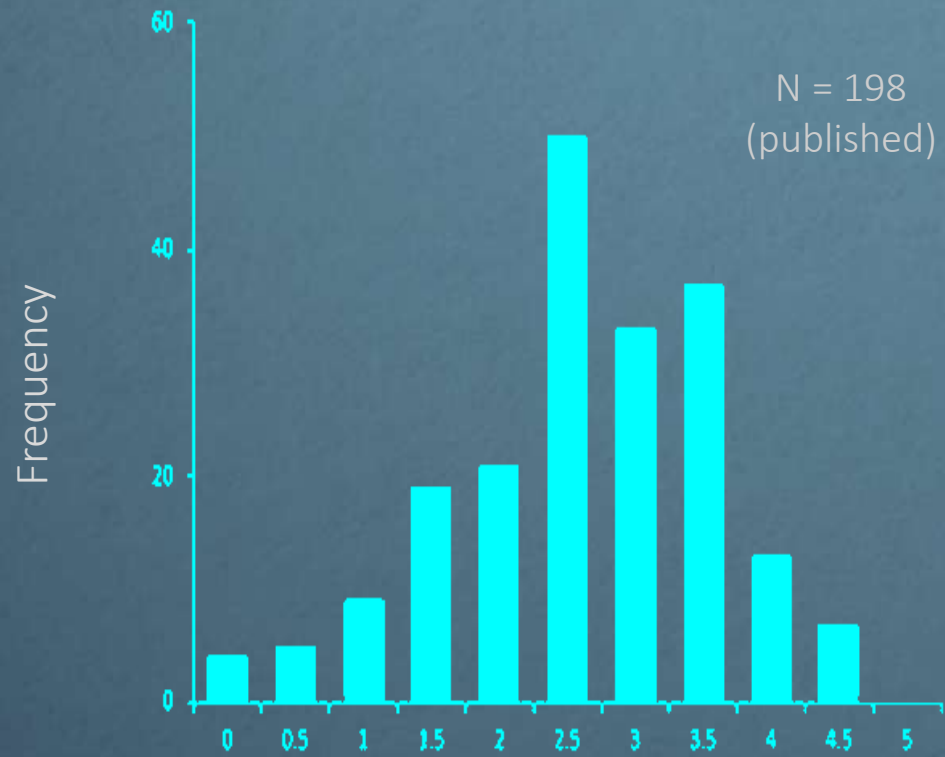
Orthodoxy



Coherence



Is this what successful communication of scientific findings looks like?



No. of Behaviours
(out of 5)

Consistency

Ability

Sensitivity

Orthodoxy

Coherence

Random
Match
Probability

Likelihood
Ratio

Verbal
Label





Qualifications

Evidence of training, study or certification directly relevant to the opinion



Qualifications



Proficiency

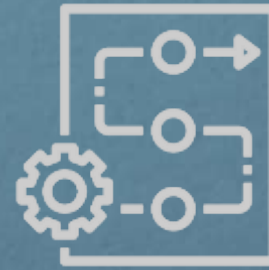
Proven track record of completing competent analyses and accurate opinions



Qualifications



Proficiency



Procedure

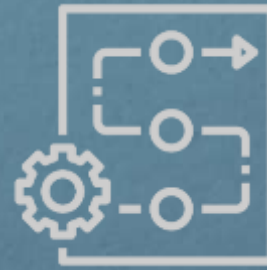
What analyses were completed and in what way



Qualifications



Proficiency



Procedure



Assumptions

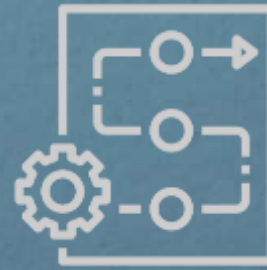
What did/does the practitioner assume to be true when forming their opinion



Qualifications



Proficiency



Procedure



Assumptions



Validity

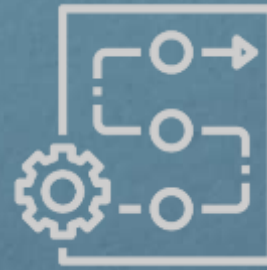
Evidence of the accuracy and reliability of the methods and procedures used



Qualifications



Proficiency



Procedure



Assumptions



Validity



Human Factors

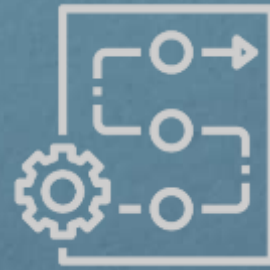
Information about who knew what when and how any potential for bias was managed



Qualifications



Proficiency



Procedure



Assumptions



Validity



Human Factors



Limitations

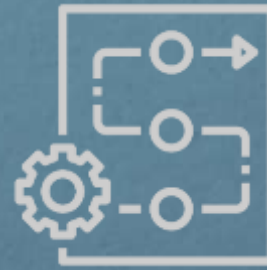
Disclosures about evidence quality, contamination, non-conformities, peer disagreement etc.



Qualifications



Proficiency



Procedure



Assumptions



Validity



Human Factors



Limitations



Conflict

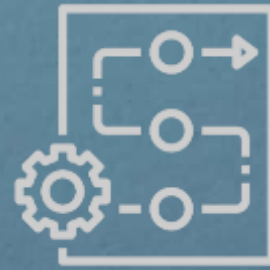
Information about significant controversy's or disagreements relevant to the opinions provided



Qualifications



Proficiency



Procedure



Assumptions



Validity



Human Factors

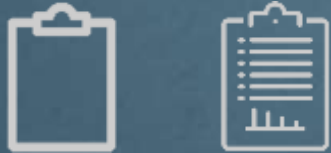


Limitations



Conflict

“Only two properly designed studies...have been conducted...found false positive rates... that could be as high as 1 in 306 in one study and 1 in 18 in the other study.”

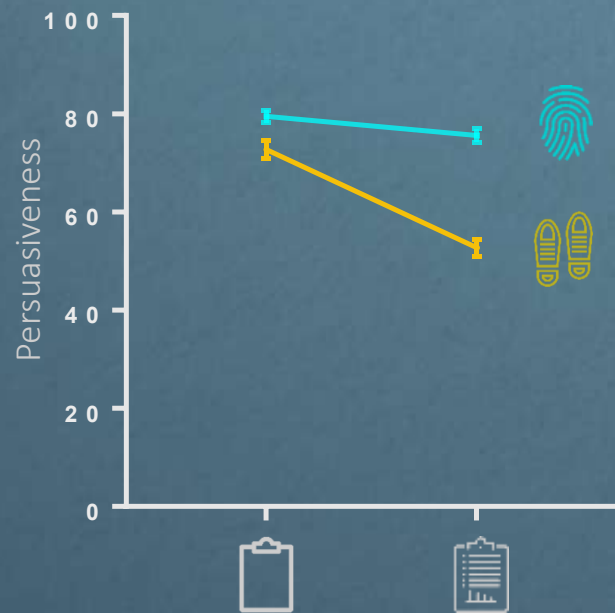


“No properly designed studies... have been conducted, so we cannot give an accurate estimate of error rates.”

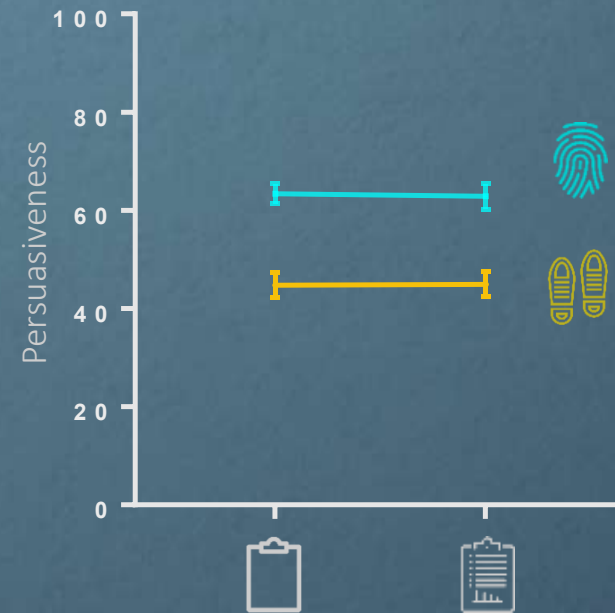




N = 566



N = 240



What would it look like for someone to genuinely understand my scientific findings?

Thank you

k.martire@unsw.edu.au

Please share your feedback about this talk <https://goo.gl/EUiOE9>



UNSW
SYDNEY

- Bali, A. S., Martire, K. A., & Edmond, G. (2021). Lay comprehension of statistical evidence: A novel measurement approach. *Law and Human Behavior*, 45(4), 370–390. <https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000457>
- Koehler JJ. (2001). When are people persuaded by DNA match statistics? *Law and Human Behavior* 25(5):493–513.
- Lindsey S, Hertwig R, Gigerenzer G. (2002) Communicating statistical DNA evidence. *Jurimetrics*. 43:147–163.
- Martire, K. A. (2018). Clear communication through clear purpose: understanding statistical statements made by forensic scientists. *Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 50(6), 619–627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00450618.2018.1439101>
- Martire, K. A., & Edmond, G. (2020). How well do lay people comprehend statistical statements from forensic scientists. *Handbook of Forensic Statistics*, 201–224. <https://osf.io/preprints/osf/67fgp>
- Martire, K. A., Kemp, R. I., Sayle, M., & Newell, B. R. (2014). On the interpretation of likelihood ratios in forensic science evidence: Presentation formats and the weak evidence effect. *Forensic Science International*, 240, 61–68. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2014.04.005>
- Summersby, S., Edmond, G., Kemp, R. I., Ballantyne, K. N., & Martire, K. A. (2024). The effect of following best practice reporting recommendations on legal and community evaluations of forensic examiners reports. *Forensic Science International*, 359, 112034. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2024.112034>
- Thompson, W. C., Grady, R.H., Lai, E., & Stern, H (2018) Perceived strength of forensic scientists' reporting statements about source conclusions, *Law, Probability and Risk*, 17(2), 133–155. <https://doi.org/10.1093/lpr/mgy012>
- Thompson, W. C., & Newman, E. J. (2015). Lay understanding of forensic statistics: Evaluation of random match probabilities, likelihood ratios, and verbal equivalents. *Law and human behavior*, 39(4), 332.
- National Research Council (2009). *Strengthening forensic science in the United States: a path forward*. National Academies Press.